

What we claim is:

1. A syringe pump adapted to receive a syringe having a plunger movable along a barrel, the pump comprising: a drive mechanism for moving said plunger along said barrel; and an occlusion detector responsive to occlusion to flow of medication from said syringe, wherein the pump is operable in response to a detected occlusion to reverse the drive applied to move said plunger along said barrel sufficiently to reduce excess force on the medication caused by said occlusion.
2. A pump according to Claim 1, wherein said occlusion detector includes a force sensor.
3. A pump according to Claim 2, wherein the pump is arranged to reverse the drive until force detected by said force sensor reaches a predetermined level.
4. A pump according to Claim 3, wherein the pump is arranged to reverse the drive until force detected by said force sensor is substantially 10% of the force at which an occlusion is detected.
5. A syringe pump adapted to receive a syringe having a plunger movable along a barrel, the pump comprising: a drive mechanism, said drive mechanism including a motor, a leadscrew driven by said motor and a plunger retainer movable along the leadscrew such as to move said plunger along said barrel; and a force sensor mounted with said plunger retainer to detect excess force on said plunger, wherein the pump is operable

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in response to an output from said force sensor indicative of an excess force to reverse said motor sufficiently to reduce substantially said excess force.

6. A method of controlling a syringe pump comprising the steps of: applying a force to drive a plunger along a barrel of a syringe to dispense medication; detecting an occlusion to the flow of medication out of the syringe; and responding to said detected occlusion by reversing the drive on said plunger sufficient to reduce excess pressure on the medication.

7. ~~A method of controlling a syringe pump comprising the steps of: applying a force to drive a plunger along a barrel of a syringe to dispense medication; detecting force on said plunger, responding to a force on said plunger above a predetermined value by changing the force applied to drive said plunger such that said detected force reduces below said predetermined value.~~

8. A method according to Claim 7, wherein force applied to drive said plunger is changed to reduce said detected force to substantially 10% of said predetermined value.

9. A method according to Claim 6, wherein the pump generates an alarm when force on said plunger exceeds a predetermined value.

10. A method according to Claim 6, wherein the pump only reapplies force to dispense medication when the pump is manually restarted after detection of an occlusion.